

# Ready for Growth

## **2008-09 Saskatchewan Provincial Budget KEEPING PROMISES**

### **Saskatchewan's economy is thriving.**

To make sure we are prepared for continued growth, the Government has announced a **\$1 billion Ready for Growth Initiative** for capital and infrastructure improvements:

- \$408 million for roads and highways across the province
- \$191 million to fix hospitals and health facilities, purchase medical equipment and to continue construction of the new provincial laboratory
- \$164 million for new K-12 school projects and post-secondary capital
- \$139 million for municipal infrastructure (\$102 million) and community facilities (\$37 million through the Building Communities Program)
- \$98 million for other initiatives – \$27 million for forest fire fleet renewal and fire towers; \$6 million for parks; \$65 million for various government-owned investments such as completing construction of the Regina Provincial Correctional Centre, replacing FleetNet with an up-to-date emergency communications system, maintaining other government buildings and replacing equipment

### **This Budget fulfills 40 campaign promises:**

- ✓ \$12 million Graduate Retention Program – up to \$20,000 tuition rebate for post-secondary graduates from Saskatchewan institutions who make their careers here
- ✓ \$38.1 million funding increase to post-secondary institutions
- ✓ \$25.5 million to continue the university tuition freeze for 2008
- ✓ \$20.7 million for nurse recruitment and retention – on top of the \$60 million partnership with the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses funded in 2007-08
- ✓ \$10.5 million for more nursing training seats
- ✓ \$6.1 million for more physician training seats, recruitment and retention
- ✓ New prescription drug plan – \$15 cap for children
- ✓ \$10.7 million increase for cancer care
- ✓ \$6.1 million increase for new prescription drugs
- ✓ 10-year capital plan for health care
- ✓ \$250,000 to conduct patient exit surveys
- ✓ \$1.5 million for a Patient First Review of health care
- ✓ \$1 million a year in new funding to promote health and wellness
- ✓ Increasing the property tax rebate for homeowners – average annual savings of \$133

- ✓ Increasing the property tax rebate on farmland – average annual savings of \$2,072
- ✓ \$150 per year Active Families Benefit (begins in 2009 tax year)
- ✓ Doubling the Caregivers Tax Credit to \$8,190
- ✓ \$34.6 million increase to K-12 funding
- ✓ \$45.3 million in funding for child care and early childhood development and learning (with 500 child care spaces and 4% wage lifts for child care workers)
- ✓ \$500,000 annual increase to school lunch and anti-hunger programs
- ✓ \$5 million for food banks and Community Based Organizations (CBOs) – for life skills and job skills training. As well, CBOs will receive a \$3.3 million increase for salaries and operating costs
- ✓ \$91.5 million to fully fund new agricultural risk management programs (AgriStability and AgriInvest) plus \$129.8 million for Crop Insurance, an increase of \$25.8 million
- ✓ \$300 million in interest-free loans to municipalities over four years to support lot development under the Saskatchewan Infrastructure Growth Initiative
- ✓ \$140 million over two years (from the NewGrade upgrader sale) to roads and highways
- ✓ 7% increase to municipal revenue sharing
- ✓ \$5 million increase to Saskatchewan parks to upgrade facilities, create more electrified campsites and improve operations
- ✓ \$8 million increase to double funding for tourism and support marketing, capital investments, improved highway signage and to attract more events to Saskatchewan
- ✓ Eliminating the \$3 per day firewood fee – the “wiener roast tax”
- ✓ \$700,000 to create a Capital City Commission
- ✓ \$3 million to hire 30 new police officers
- ✓ \$7 million in new funding to toughen security in prisons and improve rehabilitation
- ✓ \$1.1 million in new funding to transition houses and sexual assault centres
- ✓ Increasing the Victim Impact Surcharge on offenders to increase support for victims of crime
- ✓ \$5.1 million for addiction treatment
- ✓ \$10 million increase for Green Initiatives
- ✓ \$1 million in additional funding for Petroleum Technology Research Centre and the International Test Centre for CO<sub>2</sub> capture
- ✓ \$250,000 in funding to the Johnson-Shoyama School of Public Policy
- ✓ Reinstating the 10% Mineral Exploration Tax Credit
- ✓ \$250 million debt reduction
- ✓ Tabling a balanced budget

